

## A Good Surprise by monaquinn

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Angst, Fix It Fic, Found Family, Hurt/Comfort, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Mom!Steve, basically how steve adopted max, billy is an asshole theres no redeeming him, i guess hints of steve/billy if thats your cup of tea but its NOT MINE, i love steve wow, max is a mush, steve has bad parents

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**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Steve Harrington & Maxine "Max" Mayfield

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**Summary:**

Steve thought Billy wasn't going to bother Max at all after the incident with the baseball bat. And he didn't.

Until one morning when the blue Camaro pulled up to school with no Max in sight.

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### Author's Note:

Max is my favorite character and I really think Steve should adopt her. She deserves all the hugs. ALL OF THEM. Surprisingly there is no mileven in this. I didn't know I was capable of that.

After the almost end of the world, the days went slow. He had almost died, lost a girl he thought he loved, and developed a friendship with a bunch of middle schoolers in the past few months. Math class and college applications just didn't seem to be that important anymore. He started shutting people out, the kids at his school not understanding what he had been through. He found himself hanging out with Jonathan and Nancy, it wasn't as awkward as it should've been, and occasionally would pick up Dustin and his little shit head friends, take them out for ice cream or something like that. It wasn't a perfect constant, but it was his life. And he was not taking it for granted this time.

However, there was one constant. Billy Fucking Hargrove. The idiot thought he ran the school now, and would constantly rub it in Steve's face. Steve honestly didn't care one bit about him, but his mere presence in Steve's life was annoying. Wherever Steve went, he was sure Billy would follow with some taunting remark. Billy in the locker room, Billy in the shower, Billy in the classroom, Billy in detention, always right by his side. And Max. Max sulking out of Billy's Camaro every morning, looking like she wanted nothing else but to get inside the building and away from her stepbrother. Max at the end of each day, skating up to the car, her face tinted green with nerves. She was the kid Steve probably knew the least about, other than Eleven, because she was new to town and mostly kept to herself. She was a capable girl, so Steve tried not to worry about her too much. After all, he thought Billy wasn't going to bother her at all after the incident with the baseball bat. And he didn't.

Until one morning when the blue Camaro pulled up to school with no Max in sight.

Billy got out from the drivers seat and sauntered into school like nothing was wrong. Steve's insides began to squirm. He had seen the kids enter the side door of the middle school when he pulled into the parking lot, and did not recall seeing a head of red hair in the mix. His heart sunk to the bottom of his chest. Where was she?

He went to his first period class, English, and tried to drown in whatever the hell Shakespeare was trying to convey in *The Tempest*. Billy sat next to him, being a typical nuisance, until he couldn't take it anymore.

"Wheres Max?" he whispered to the boy next him, trying not to sound as worried as he felt.

Billy looked up, scoffed, and returned to doodle a pair of breasts and a dick on a crumpled up piece of notebook paper.

Steve snatched the paper away from him, and repeated his question. "Where. Is. Max?"

Chewing his gum obnoxiously, Billy shrugged. Steve slammed his hands on the desk, stood, and grabbed Billy's shirt by the collar. "Where is she?" He implored.

Mrs. Gilbert, the old bag of bones that called herself an English teacher directed her attention to the back of the classroom. "Mr. Harrington and Mr. Hargrove, please find your seats. You are causing a distraction to the rest of the classroom."

"She's at home, if you really want to know." Billy spat. "I know you like virgins like Nancy Wheeler, but thirteen seems a little young. Do what you want though, I don't care. Better you then that nigg-"

Steve wasn't going to let him finish that sentence. He punched Billy hard, and left the classroom, ignoring Mrs. Gilbert's loud protests. He had places to be.

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The Hargove-Mayfield house had a tidy exterior, a neatly trimmed garden, and nicely painted white walls. Steve wondered how such a nice place could hold such a terrible person like Billy as he ran up to

the front door.

He knocked three times, but there was no answer. Luckily, the back door was unlocked. He walked through the small kitchen, noticing a picture on the counter. It was of Max and her mother. There was a third person in the photo, but his face had been scribbled out in permanent marker. Steve assumed that it was Max's dad. The girl looked happy in the photo, smiling and laughing at something that the person with no face had said. Steve ran his fingers over the frame, and called out Max's name. No response. "It's Steve!" He called out, hoping that maybe she would respond if she knew it wasn't Billy or her parents.

The silence in the room stopped a few moments later. A weak voice called out, "I'm upstairs!" Steve took the steps two at a time, and knocked on the door he remembered to be hers. "Come in." She responded.

He wasn't ready for the sight that greeted him. Max was hunched over on her bed, an icepack held up to her face. Dried blood was crusted near her nose, and there were big purple bruises on her eye and nose. Her right hand was purple as well, blood under her bitten fingernails. It seemed like she had tried to punch back. The rats nest she called her hair was shooting up in multiple different directions, and she was still in a pair of red flannel pajamas that were at least three sizes too big for her tiny frame. Worst of all, she was crying. Little quiet sobs that Steve could only hear because he was standing a few feet away from her.

Steve rushed to the bathroom, wetting a couple towels. He came back, sat down on the bed next to her, pushed her hair aside, and began to clean away the blood that had come out of her nose. He opened his mouth to ask who did this to her, but he knew the answer. Billy. Instead he asked; "Where are your parents?"

She looked up at him, big green eyes meeting his brown ones. "Don't tell the other kids." was the first thing she said, catching him off guard. "And- um- business trip." She put air quotes around the words. "They are always on a business trip. My stepdad doesn't like to deal with Billy's shit. They don't notice how poorly he treats me, or they don't care. I don't really know." She shrugged.

Steve sighed. He felt that. His parents were rarely home either. He knew that business trips weren't month long affairs, but he kept quiet about it. He had gotten used to the perpetually empty house, anyway. "Don't worry, I won't tell your little buds. Pull your hair back." She obeyed and he got the last of the blood off. He took the ice pack away from her, and put it against her fist, applying pressure to it.

Max sniffled, trying to hold back the tears. She didn't like it when anyone saw her cry, and especially didn't want Steve Harrington too. Eventually, she couldn't keep them at bay, and the waterworks came. She began to sob, fat tears rolling down her cheeks. Steve really didn't know how to handle this, but he tried his best, pulling the girl into a tight hug. "It's gonna be alright, Kid." He muttered, "I'll fucking kill him."

"Don't" She whispered. "He's strong. Last time he beat the shit out of you. He'll kill you, Steve." Her tone was dark and serious. Deep down, He knew she was right. Billy Hargrove was a monster, a big strong monster that wouldn't go away no matter how hard he tried.

The girl took a deep breath, and pulled out of his embrace. "I really didn't mean to make him mad," She sniffed, "My alarm clock didn't go off and I was late. He came in here, and he was really mad that I didn't get up on time, so he punched me. I punched back. I shouldn't have. That really made him mad, he hit me about five or six times after that. He got my nose real bad. It was my fault anyways. I shouldn't have made him mad."

Six times. That was insane. Steves heart welled with even more sympathy than before. "Thats the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Kid, Billy is a sicko. It's not your fault."

She scoffed. "I know its not my fault. He's a jackass. I've just been so careful, not to make him angry, and I screwed up today. Big time." She wiped the sleeve of her ratty pajamas on her nose. "He hasn't bothered me since the I threatened him, but it was only a matter of time. He's gonna come home today and beat the shit out of me again tonight probably." Her brows furrowed when she saw the concerned look on Steves face. "It's okay, really. I'm used to it. I can deal with it."

“You see Max, you shouldn’t have to deal with it. Thats the thing.” He sighed, not believing the offer he was about to make. “Ya’ know, my house is pretty much always empty. You can crash on the couch tonight if you want. Hell, you can crash on this couch for the whole week. Whenever you want. Sound good?”

A shadow of doubt flickered across her face. “You really mean it?”

His heart broke for this girl who had been lied to and pushed around her whole life. “I really mean it.” He repeated. “Now, I’m kind of hungry. Wanna go to the Diner? I’ll buy you a shake and a burger, but you can’t steal all my fries. Deal?” He desperately hoped none of the waitresses would ask any questions about the girls bruises, but he knew the smile on her face was going to make it all worth it.

She nodded, her green eyes lighting up.

“Go put something presentable on, “ He said, ruffling her hair. “I’ll meet you in the car in five.” He said, leaving the room.

Steve had never wanted a little sister. But sometimes things you never wanted will come into your life and surprise you in the best way possible. And as Max joked with him in the empty diner about Dustin’s hair care routine and rated the best horror movies, Steve decided that this was one of those good surprises.

### **Author's Note:**

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